

From **The Winter's Tale**

Here's flowers for you;
Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram;
The marigold, that goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

From **Sabbath Bells**

I've often on a Sabbath day
Where pastoral quiet dwells
Lay down among the new mown hay
To listen distant bells
That beautifully flung the sound
Upon the quiet wind
While beans in blossom breathed around
A fragrance o'er the mind
A fragrance and a joy beside
That never wears away
The very air seems deified
Upon a Sabbath day
So beautiful the flitting wrack
Slow pausing from the eye
Earth's music seemed to call them back
Calm settled in the sky

The ear it lost and caught the sound
Swelled beautifully on
And fitful melody around
Of sweetness heard and gone
I felt such thoughts I yearned to sing
The humming air's delight
That seemed to move the swallow's wing
Into a wilder flight

The butterfly in wings of brown
Would find me where I lay
Fluttering and bobbing up and down
And settling on the hay
The waving blossoms seemed to throw
Their fragrance to the sound
While up and down and loud and low
The bells were ringing round

John Clare (1793–1864)

Sea Pictures

1. Morning

The morning sun has pierced the mist,
And beach and cliff and ocean kissed.
Blue as the lapis-lazuli
The sea reflects the azure sky.
In the salt healthy breeze I stand
Upon the solid floor of sand.
Along the untrodden shore are seen
Fresh tufts of weed maroon and green,
And ruffled kelp and stranded sticks
And shells and stones and sea-moss mix.
The low black rocks, forever wet,
Lie tangled in their pulpy net.
The shy sand-pipers fly and light –
And swallows circle out of sight.
Out where the sky the horizon meets
Glide glimmering sails in scattered fleets.
Old Ocean smiles as though amid
His leagues of brine no treachery hid.
And safe upon the sandy marge,
By stranded boat and floating barge,
Gay children leap and laugh and run,
Browned by the salt air and the sun.

Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813–92)

She Has Made Me Wayside Posies

She has made me wayside posies: here they stand,
Bringing fresh memories of where they grew.
As new-come travellers from a world we knew
Wake every while some image of their land,
So these whose buds our woodland breezes fanned
Bring to my room the meadow where they blew,
The brook-side cliff, the elms where wood-doves coo –
And every flower is dearer for her hand.

Oh blossoms of the paths she loves to tread,
Some grace of her is in all thoughts you bear:
For in my memories of your homes that were
The old sweet loneliness they kept is fled,
And would I think it back I find instead
A presence of my darling mingling there.

Augusta Webster (1837–94)

July

I am for the open meadows,
Open meadows full of sun,
Where the hot bee hugs the clover,
The hot breezes drop and run.

I am for the uncut hayfields
Open to the cloudless blue, –
For the wide unshadowed acres
Where the summer's pomps renew;

Where the grass-tops gather purple,
Where the ox-eye daisies thrive,
And the mendicants of summer
Laugh to feel themselves alive;

Where the hot scent steams and quivers,
Where the hot saps thrill and stir,
Where in leaf-cells' green pavilions
Quaint artificers confer;

Where the bobolinks are merry,
Where the beetles bask and gleam,
Where above the powdered blossoms
Powdered moth-wings poise and dream

Where the bead-eyed mice adventure
In the grass-roots green and dun.
Life is good and love is eager
In the playground of the sun!

Charles G D Roberts (1860–1943)

Dusk in June

Evening, and all the birds
In a chorus of shimmering sound
Are easing their hearts of joy
For miles around.

The air is blue and sweet,
The few first stars are white, –
Oh let me like the birds
Sing before night.

Sara Teasdale (1884–1933)

From Last Hours

The cool of an oak's unchequered shade
Falls on me as I lie in deep grass
Which rushes upward, blade beyond blade.
While higher the darting grass-flowers pass
Piercing the blue with their crocketed spires
And waving flags, and the ragged fires
Of the sorrel's cresset – a green, brave town
Vegetable, new in renown.

Over the tree's edge, as over a mountain
Surges the white of the moon,
A cloud comes up like the surge of a fountain,
Pressing round and low at first, but soon
Heaving and piling a round white dome.
How lovely it is to be at home
Like an insect in the grass
Letting life pass!

D H Lawrence (1885–1930)

Escape

Boat-bow furl, the little ruck of it,
purling over – silk disturbed, slight
gatherings and smoothings out

of water pushed aside beneath
your passage through reflected trees,
immobile clouds, trailing a hand.

The quiet of your blood to listen to,
the heart's faithful service below deck;
leisurely progress through canals.

Sunshine slicks a warm patina
over you; motion purrs, it breathes
like gossamer against your face.

Let there be nothing else but this
slow drift – a long, blue corridor
no doors, no windows, just the sky.

Jim Friedman (1947–)

Knee Deep

As cows in shallow rivers in August heat
as children in feathery grass at buttercup time
as ponies down by the hedge with manes full of burrs
so we in the jungly depths of our raspberry patch.

As anglers intent in the centre of a stream
as boys treading down tall weeds for a space to camp
as fathers digging a moat in the sandy beach
so we at the heart of our lives in the lap of summer.

Jenny King (1940–)

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THIS IS AN EXCLUSIVE summer edition for you, our PitWR Friends, and thank you for all your wonderful support over the years.

We continue to feature cheerful and uplifting poems that often celebrate the natural world, whilst being mindful these are very difficult times for many.

We hope at least one poem from this selection might transport you to a place of beauty and solace, at least in your mind's eye.

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